

SECRET SECURITY INFORMATION

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No. 3716  
11 Nov 52

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Minister of State Without Portfolio:

a. Biographical Sketch of OGATA Taketora: (UNCLASSIFIED)

NAME: OGATA Taketora

POSITION: State Minister and Chief Cabinet Secretary

DATE OF BIRTH: 30 Jan 1888

PLACE OF BIRTH: Fukuoka Prefecture

EDUCATION: Graduated from Waseda University. Attended the London School of Economics and Political Science

WIFE: Koto (Born 1891, third daughter of HARA Makizo)

CHILDREN: Son -- Ichitaro (Born Apr 1916)

Son -- Kenji (Born Oct 1917)

Daughter -- SONODA (OGATA) Keiko (Born Oct 1920)

Daughter -- Shigeru (Born Nov 1927)

PAST CAREER: (SECRET. SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED. NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS)

After graduating from Waseda University in 1911, OGATA started his journalist career by joining the Osaka "Asahi" newspaper staff. In 1920, he traveled to Europe to study in London, briefly interrupting his schooling to cover the Washington Conference in Nov 21 as an "Asahi" reporter. Upon his return to Japan in early 1922, he held increasingly responsible positions with the "Asahi" newspaper, until by 1934, he had worked his way up to the posts of editor-in-chief of the Tokyo "Asahi" and director of the "Asahi" Newspaper Company. Because of these positions, he also became a director of the Domei News Agency. In 1943, he became vice-president of the "Asahi" Newspaper Company but resigned in the following year after he had become a State Minister.

Having acquired a distinguished reputation as one of the ablest editors in Japan, OGATA during the early war years became a member of numerous governmental and civic committees, including the position of adviser to the Cabinet Board of Information. In 1940, he was appointed a member of the preparatory committee for the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA) (Taisei Yokusan Kai) and later became director and Councilor of the IRAA, the patriotic organization whose part in the wartime life of Japan was to gear the nation's politics and economy, as well as public sentiment, to the war effort. From Aug 44, to Jun 45, OGATA was vice-president of the IRAA. In addition, he held various executive posts of IRAA-affiliated groups; he was consultant to the Imperial Rule Assistance Political Society (IRAPS) and president of the Imperial Rule Assistance Manhood Group from Jan to Jun 45. He also was associated with various other patriotic and ultranationalist societies, councilor of the Great Japan Rise Asia League (Dai Nippon Koe Domei) and adviser to the Black Ocean Society (Genyosha) in 1944; he was vice-chairman of the funeral committee for TOYAMA Mitsuru, founder of the super-patriotic Black Dragon Society (Kokuryu Kai).

In Jul 44, OGATA was appointed State Minister Without Portfolio and concurrently became president of the Information Board of the KOISO Cabinet, the first man with practical experience as a journalist to hold that post. The

(b) CIC Spot Reports 8, 9 Nov 52

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Cabinet Information Board had been established in 1940 to control the dissemination of information to the public; it controlled all the news facilities and publications and during the war acted as the Cabinet's propaganda machine. In May 44, he was appointed Adviser to the SUZUKI Cabinet. In August of the same year, he was appointed to the House of Peers and became State Minister Without Portfolio, concurrently holding the posts of President of the Information Board and Chief Cabinet Secretary in the so-called "surrender Cabinet" of Prince HIGASHI-KUNI. OGATA was not prosecuted as a war criminal but in Jan 46 was removed from public office through the purge directive, SCAPIN 550. He was affected by Category "C" (Influential members of ultranationalist Societies), Category "D" (Influential in the IRAA, IRAPS and affiliated organizations), and Category "G" (Other militarists and ultranationalists, based on his positions as wartime Chief Cabinet Secretary and President of the Information Board).

Soon after his depurge on 6 Aug 51, OGATA became associated with a number of organizations, some of them rightist and ultranationalist in character. He formally joined the Liberal Party on 24 Dec 51. In May 52, he was sent to Southeast Asia as special envoy of Prime Minister YOSHIDA, with the primary mission of establishing economic relations between Japan and Southeast Asian countries. He returned to Japan in June, after having visited Formosa, Thailand, Burma, India, and the Philippine Islands. This trip resulted in considerable publicity for OGATA and the Japanese press speculated that YOSHIDA was considering OGATA for a Cabinet post and possibly was grooming him as his successor. In the Cabinet reshuffle of early Aug 52, YOSHIDA reportedly considered OGATA for the post of Director-General of the National Safety Agency, but opposition from within the Liberal Party compelled the Prime Minister to abandon his plan. On 1 Oct 52, OGATA was elected to the House of Representatives from the Fukuoka First District which commands five Diet seats; he won second place with 54,820 votes. (c)

Comment: (SECRET. SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED. NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS) OGATA's background presents a paradox; while he was editor of one of the most liberal newspapers before the war, he also was connected with many ultranationalist organizations. The theory has been advanced that his eminence in the newspaper world at first was responsible for many of his appointments; later, his positions in the Cabinet ministries automatically placed him on such boards as the Council for the Supreme Guidance of the War which acted as liaison body between the Cabinet and the army and navy. As Fukuoka's most important bureaucrat, he was appointed to other posts, such as the vice-chairmanship of TOYAMA Mitsuru's funeral committee. TOYAMA was a native of Fukuoka, and this rather than any close association with the Black Dragon Society, was the reason OGATA was selected for the committee. As for his position with the Black Ocean Society, OGATA claims that he had no connection with this ultranationalist organization prior to 1944, when Fukuoka leaders added his name to the list to add prestige to the organization since he had just been appointed to the House of Peers from Fukuoka. OGATA's close association and friendship with NAKANO Seigo, leading politician and ultranationalist, also stems from their common background in Fukuoka, Waseda University, and the newspaper world. OGATA helped dispose of NAKANO's posthumous affairs after the latter committed suicide in Oct 1944, in protest to TOJO's tyrannical policies. OGATA has written his personal reminiscences of NAKANO in "The Human NAKANO Seigo" published in Dec 51. In Apr 52 he was elected president of an association to commemorate the ideas and writings of NAKANO. OGATA currently is identified with some rightist groups; in Dec 51 he was reported among the prime supporters of the West Japan National Construction League (Nishi Nippon Kensetsu Kokumin Remmei) which includes a number of former militarists and ultranationalists in the Kyushu area. It has been reported that this nationalistic league was partly organized to form a political base for OGATA and to be the main organization to conduct pre-election campaigning activities in Fukuoka for him. His name also was linked with the Great Harmony Party (Daiwa To) which aimed at the revival of extreme nationalism, with the Asia Youths Peace Society (Asia Seinen Heiwa Kai), and the Old Timers (Furui Renchu) faction of the Co-operation and Harmony Party (Kyowa To), an ideological descendant of the

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late ISHIHARA Kanji's East Asia League (Toa Renmei) which was banned in Feb 46. It has been reported that lineage organizations of the defunct East Asia League have been seeking to push OGATA into the political arena; right-wingers allegedly have looked upon him as a possible leader for their cause. While OGATA is expected to receive considerable opposition from liberals and leftists alike because of these prewar and postwar nationalist affiliations, he has the support of the more conservative political leaders. He has the respect particularly of his fellow depurgees and acceptable to both the YOSHIDA and HATOYAMA factions. OGATA has regained considerable public renown since his depurge and the Japanese press during mid-1952 predicted that he was destined to become one of the leading politicians, possibly a future prime minister. His appointment to the Cabinet generally was greeted favorably by the press, being considered an able and strong man for the difficult post of Cabinet Chief Secretary. With his background in journalism and prewar politics, he is expected to add a fresh note to the Cabinet, especially since he is not a member of the "inner circle" of the YOSHIDA group.

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